Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

3 October 1995

Implications of Gligorov Assassination Attempt

President's Status in Doubt

As of 1700 local time (1100 EDT) today President Gligorov was in the state hospital in Skopje and had just emerged from surgery to remove small pieces of shrapnel and bone fragments from his brain after this morning's assassination attempt against him, His vital signs are stable and doctors attending Gligorov give him a 70-75 percent chance of survival. Gligorov also reportedly suffered wounds to his face and right eye area. Although we do not yet know the full extent of Gligorov's injuries, all source information indicates that they appear much worse than originally reported. the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center today received an urgent request for information and neurosurgical assistance. this afternoon say that a French medical team has departed for Skopje.

(b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(3)

conclude that Gligorov sustained a major head injury and that recovery will take weeks to months. The part of the brain adjacent to the eye, the frontal lobe, appears to be the part injured and is involved in the subtle processing of emotions. It is not clear whether the globe of the eye was penetrated; if it was, Gligorov will probably lose sight in his eye. We have no indication of specific disability immediately post-surgery. Gligorov was conscious and talking after surgery are encouraging.

(b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

- **say that effects of a head injury, especially in a 78-year old such as Gligorov, are not always immediately apparent. Even if his injuries are not life threatening, Gligorov faces considerable recuperation time. It is uncertain if Gligorov will have any residual disability.** (b)(3)

Nationalists Likely Perpetrators

Two members of a small splinter group of the nationalist Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO/DPMNE) are in custody as the lead suspects in today's assassination attempt against President Gligorov.

(b)(1) (b)(3)

VMRO/DPMNE has publicly condemned the attack and has canceled its scheduled demonstration tomorrow against the Macedonia-Greek accord.

- VMRO/DPMNE boycotted parliamentary and Presidential elections last fall and does not have a voice in government. It has not been able to rally substantial popular support during public protests against Gligorov's recent agreement with Greece. **Feeling increasingly marginalized, this splinter group--comprised of 20-30 radical nationalists--may have adopted the terrorist-type tactics of its early twentieth century antecedents.** (b)(3)

(b)(3)

CL BY:
DECL: OADR
DRV FR: MULTIPLE

(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155

Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155

(b)(3)

Although less likely suspects, radical ethnic Albanians, radical Serbs in Macedonia, Islamic organizations, and even members of the Macedonian Government all have potential motive to target Gligorov.

- Activist ethnic Albanians gained influence following their confrontation with the Macedonian Government over an Albanian-language university last winter and have been advocating a more proactive approach to win concessions from the government. **Ethnic Albanian participation in the assassination would at most involve a rogue group of radicals; by all reports, the majority of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia support working within the system to effect change.**

- Despite movement on improved relations with Belgrade, Serbian Democratic Party leader Miletic recently condemned Skopje for pursuing close ties with the West.

- Skopje, wary of increasing Islamic influence among Muslims in Macedonia, recently expelled a number of Islamic non-governmental organizations with possible ties to Islamic fundamentalist groups.

- Earlier this year, Gligorov expressed frustration with his government [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) Senior government officials, according to a variety of sources, have privately expressed frustration with Gligorov's heavy-handed ruling style and their own inability to influence political decisions. [redacted] (b)(3)

Likelihood of Political Instability

If Gligorov is unable to resume office soon--either due to the extent of his injuries or death--Macedonia is likely to experience a period of heightened political instability that could slow implementation of the Macedonian-Greek accord and could also invite a resurgence of heightened tensions within Macedonia's ethnic-Albanian community.

- Skopje is likely to move quickly to clamp down on radical nationalist opposition groups in the wake of the assassination attempt. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

- Ethnic Albanian involvement in the attack would severely destabilize Macedonia, likely reigniting ethnic tensions in ethnic-Albanian-populated western Macedonia. Skopje would likely use the incident to clamp down on Albanians and stall negotiations on ethnic issues. The Albanian language university--currently tacitly accepted by Skopje--would likely be closed, which could generate demonstrations similar to those last winter when one ethnic Albanian was killed. [redacted] (b)(3)

A successor is unlikely to garner the combination of public support and government control that Gligorov used to balance ethnic-Albanian demands and nationalist criticism during recent years of regional instability and economic hardship.

- According to the Macedonian Constitution, Assembly Chairman Stojan Andov will assume the duties of the President if Gligorov is incapacitated. Andov heads the second largest party in the ruling coalition--the Liberal Party--and sees himself as the natural successor to Gligorov, according to US diplomats. [redacted] Andov—like Gligorov—supports the recent Macedonian-Greek recognition accord. Andov, however, is (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] (b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155

Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155

more nationalistic than Gligorov, [redacted], and is a staunch opponent of concessions to Macedonia's Albanian community. He has argued harshly and repeatedly with the President on this issue. (b)(1) (b)(3)

- [redacted] Andov is pleased with the performance of US peacekeeping troops in Macedonia. Although he generally declines to comment publicly on the issue to avoid irritating neighboring Serbia, he favors increasing their presence. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Threat To US Forces in Macedonia (b)(3)

US forces stationed in Macedonia as part of the UN Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) may face an increased threat as a result of the assassination attempt on President Gligorov, especially if Gligorov is incapacitated by his injuries or ethnic Albanians or Serbs are determined to be involved in the attack

- If ethnic tensions between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians ignite, US forces almost certainly would be called upon to calm the situation--despite the limits of their mandate--and could quickly become targets themselves. Macedonian officials in the past have indicated they would call for such assistance from UNPREDEP. [redacted] (b)(3)

The Serbian Democratic party--with heavily pro-Serb, anti-western sentiments, would pose the most significant increased threat to UNPROFOR if determined responsible for the attack. The party has threatened both US forces and the Macedonian government in the past--most recently this August. Additionally, in late August [redacted] concluded that given the situation in Bosnia, and the increasingly defensive Serb position in the Balkans, there was an increased possibility that a radical group supporting Serbian Democratic Party leader Miletic could take action against Americans in Macedonia. (b)(1) (b)(3)

- **A move by Serbian Democratic Party leader Miletic to actually execute his threats against Macedonian officials would signal a commensurate likelihood for attacks on US forces.** Miletic's supporters are largely from Kumanovo and areas near the Serb-Macedonia border, which are also the areas patrolled by US UN forces. [redacted] (b)(3)

Determination that an ultranationalist faction within VMRO-DPMNE--currently the most likely sponsor-- was responsible for the attack, however, is unlikely to unleash ethnic tensions that would threaten U.S. forces.

- **Ultranationalists, while concerned with Skopje's increasingly close ties with the West, would most likely be targeting the Macedonian government exclusively for internal political reasons; such an attack would have little or no bearing on the threat to US UN forces.** [redacted] (b)(3)

The UN Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia consists of 556 US troops and 553 troops from Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In addition, 166 UN personnel--military observers, civilian police and civilian personnel--support the UN mission at UNPREDEP Headquarters in Skopje. [redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] (b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

Approved for Release: 2025/12/08 C05962155